

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652 NA

TAGS: ETRO, TH, JA

SUBJ: PROPOSAL FOR JOINT U.S./THAI ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS

REFS: (A) BANGKOK 1423 (B) BANGKOK 2157

1. WE WANT TO RESPOND AS POSITIVELY AS WE CAN TO THE RTG
DESIRE FOR AN EXPANDED DIALOGUE ON U.S./THAI ECONOMIC RELA-
TIONS. THE CURRENT THAI INTEREST IN A MORE BALANCED RELA-
TIONSHIP IS A HEALTHY ONE AND WE WISH TO ENCOURAGE IT.
ON THE OTHER HAND, WE WOULD NOT WELCOME A REQUEST THAT WE

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UNDERTAKE DISCUSSIONS AT THE CABINET LEVEL AND ARE NOT
PREPARED TO MAKE A COMMITMENT FOR PERIODIC MEETINGS EVEN AT

A LOWER LEVEL. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER WE THINK MOST THAI/U.S. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS CAN BEST BE HANDLED, AS IN THE PAST, THROUGH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS EXCEPT WHEN THERE ARE PARTICULAR ISSUES, SUCH AS TEXTILES, THAT REQUIRE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS.

2. IN ORDER TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THAI DESIRE, WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER HOLDING SPECIAL DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS THAT WOULD COVER THE FULL RANGE OF ISSUES OF CURRENT CONCERN TO THE RTG, INCLUDING THOSE MENTIONED IN REF B. WASHINGTON IS PREFERRED BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES THAT WOULD BE OCCASIONED IN GETTING QUALIFIED PERSONNEL FROM INTERESTED WASHINGTON AGENCIES TO GO ABROAD FOR THIS PURPOSE. WASHINGTON

PARTICIPANTS WOULD BE SENIOR LEVEL OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH TOPICS BEING DISCUSSED. RATHER THAN A ROUNDTABLE TYPE "CONFERENCE" INVOLVING ALL OF THE U. S. PARTICIPANTS SIMULTANEOUSLY, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE MOST PRODUCTIVE FOR THAI TO HAVE SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH APPROPRIATE U. S. OFFICIALS ON PROPOSED DISCUSSION TOPICS. WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THESE TALKS TO BE AIMED AT IMMEDIATE RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS, AND THAI SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED FROM EXAGGERATED HOPES. WE WOULD SEE DISCUSSIONS AS EXPLORATORY IN CHARACTER, DESIGNED TO REVIEW OUR ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS AND GIVE EACH SIDE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE OTHER'S VIEWPOINT. FOR OUR PART, A MAJOR PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE TO THE THAI OF OUR SYMPATHY FOR THEIR PROBLEMS AS WELL AS OF OUR DESIRE TO ACCOMMODATE THEIR WISH TO GIVE HIGHER PRIORITY TO ECONOMIC MATTERS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP.

3. AS FOR TIMING OF WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS, WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER RTG PROPOSALS. RTG MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER FOR THEIR OWN CONVENIENCE, SCHEDULING THESE MEETINGS TO COINCIDE WITH TEXTILE NEGOTIATIONS NOW PLANNED FOR MAY. WE ASSUME THAT OSOT KOSIN AND POSSIBLY OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS TEXTILE DELEGATION, PERHAPS WITH SOME OTHER OFFICIALS ADDED, WOULD BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE VARIOUS OTHER TOPICS
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OF INTEREST. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO SCHEDULE WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS TO MESH WITH TRAVEL BY THAI ECONOMIC OFFICIALS TO PARIS FOR THE NEXT WORLD BANK CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WILL PROBABLY BE HELD IN JUNE.

4. IF THE THAI SHOULD RAISE THE QUESTION OF CABINET LEVEL MEETINGS, YOU SHOULD STRESS THAT THIS WOULD POSE INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEMS. AT THE PRESENT TIME THE USG HOLDS REGULAR CABINET-LEVEL BILATERAL ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS WITH

ONLY CANADA AND JAPAN. IN BOTH CASES THESE TALKS EMERGED FROM THE REALIZATION THAT THERE WERE MAJOR BILATERAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FOR THE U. S. AFFECTING ITS POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THESE TWO LARGEST TRADING PARTNERS WHICH DESERVED THE HIGHEST LEVEL ATTENTION. INTEREST IN SUCH MEETINGS HAS BEEN WANING OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS AND THERE IS STRONGEST DISINCLINATION HERE TO FOLLOW THE PATTERN WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY. TO DO SO WITH THAILAND WOULD, OF COURSE, CREATE A PRECEDENT THAT COULD INSPIRE REQUESTS FOR SIMILAR MEETINGS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES THAT MIGHT BELIEVE THEY HAD EQUALLY GOOD OR BETTER CLAIMS.

5. YOUR COMMENTS WOULD BE APPRECIATED. KISSINGER

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